

HOW TO BECOME AN APPRENTICE

An apprenticeship is an “earn while you learn” program with a built in formal training agreement (Indenture) providing for on-the-job training and related classroom instruction. The on-the-job training is received on the job where the employer teaches the skills of the trade. The classroom instruction is theoretical knowledge pertaining to a given trade and usually taught at an area technical college. When unavailable, factory training school, or a correspondence source can be substituted.

The term of training may vary from 2 to 5 years, depending on the trade.

Wages in the various trades vary. Most apprentices begin at approximately 50% of the current skilled rate. It has been the practice in most trades to provide a periodic step increase every six months. The apprentice must average at least 60% of the trades skilled wage rate, during the term of the apprenticeship.

Steps to Enter An Apprenticeship

1. The first step is to select a trade or occupation

The procedure varies from trade to trade or occupation. There are currently many occupations that train through the apprenticeship system. New occupations are regularly approved for apprenticeship training. The criteria for approval of an apprenticeable occupation is:

- It is customarily learned in a practical way through training on-the-job.
- There is a need for organized related instruction to supplement the on-the-job training.
- It is clearly identified and recognized throughout an industry as a separate identifiable trade.

Information on apprenticeable occupations may be obtained through field offices of the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards, local Vocational Technical College, and the administrative office of the Bureau of Administrative Standards.

2. The second step depends on your choice of occupations.

Remember, looking for Apprenticeship is like looking for a job.

Building and Construction Trades

If you want an apprenticeship in the construction trades, you would usually contact the local Joint Apprenticeship Committee of the trade. Committees maintain a waiting list of applicants who have successfully passed the test and interviews. Look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory to find the appropriate Apprenticeship Committee office, Craft Union or Labor Temple or Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards office. Ask them about the Joint Apprenticeship Committee and the procedure in making application for an apprenticeship.

Manufacturing or Service Trades

You would apply directly to the employer's personnel or hiring office. Apprenticeship openings are sometimes listed with the local Wisconsin Job Service office, technical college, or the "Help Wanted" column in the newspaper.

Large industrial plants often have a bargaining agreement with a union that makes apprenticeships open only to workers already employed in their current workforce.

Often the best chance to obtain an Apprenticeship is to find an employer willing to hire you and then persuade them to provide skilled training.

Chances to become highly skilled workers in the various trades are at a premium even in times of full employment - opportunities for participation in apprenticeships are very competitive.

To find out the name of your District Representative, call:

State of Wisconsin, Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Phone: (608) 266-3332
Fax: (608) 266-0766